

MAY 11 1960

Approved For Release 1999/09/17 : CIA-RDP75-00001R000400060070-1

Pilot Tells Reds Engine Blew Up

MOSCOW, May 10 (AP)—A Red Star article said today Francis G. Powers has indicated he believed an explosion of his jet engine halted his May Day spy flight over the Soviet Union.

Two Soviet officers, writing in the army newspaper after what they described as an interview with the 30-year-old flier from Pound, Va., reported he did not think a Soviet rocket knocked down his high-flying Lockheed U-2.

The official Russian story—announced by Premier Nikita S. Khrushchev and elaborated on in newspaper dispatches—

is that a rocket unit felled the plane with a single shot as it sped over the Central Urals at an altitude of more than 12 miles.

The authors of the Red Star article were Col. F. Luchnikov and Maj. V. Zhukov. A request by American correspondents for permission to interview Powers has gone unanswered.

Powers a Test Pilot

Powers bridled at being called a pilot, the Soviet officers wrote, and insisted he "an ace, was a test pilot."

He was quoted as saying he was paid \$2500 a month and that his dream was to buy land and build a home on it. The officers made much of the fact that a book with the picture of a half-nude woman on the cover was found in the plane and remarked:

"From its age and dirty condition one can judge that American officers found the book popular reading."

[Declaring Powers never heard of American aviation magazines mentioned to him,

with a stamp saying "spy" form. He has no sense of conscience that he is a spy.]

Accounts in other military papers reported several pictures of the flier's wife, Barbara, were found in the cabin. They said parts of the plane fell over an area nine miles in diameter.

Red Star said Powers would have been blown up if he had pressed a lever to eject himself from the plane.

The Soviet Defense Ministry newspaper said investigation of the plane wreckage showed it was rigged with a stick of TNT set to go off after the pilot was ejected.

The ejection mechanism bore a stamp saying it was last checked in 1956, and it would have failed, the paper said. But the bomb mechanism was in perfect order and would have spared neither the plane nor the flier, the report said.

Parachute Story Changed

"Powers apparently knew his boss' habits very well," Red Star said. "Probably this is why he did not make use of the catapult (ejection lever), realizing what the end would be."

Soviet Premier Nikita

Khrushchev said previously that Powers had parachuted after his plane was hit.

[Powers' interrogators quoted him as telling them his chief had said the flight over Russia would be "absolutely safe," Reuters reported. It added that Powers first described himself "a simple carrier—his master sent him and he flew" but finally admitted spying.]

Red Star said a navigation chart in the wreckage of the plane's cabin was marked with a route from Pakistan, over the Sea of Aral, to Sverdlovsk, where Powers was shot down, thence to Archangel, Murmansk and on to the Norwegian airdrome of Bodo.

Examination of the plane showed it was equipped with extra tanks carrying enough fuel to take Powers over the entire course charted on the map, the paper said.

The report also said that a container dropped near the point where Powers landed contained equipment, showing him to be "an experienced intelligence agent." The contents included powerful binoculars, warm clothing, a Soviet soldiers' shirt (although not of the usual color), a supply of canned food and water and a signal flashlight.